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E 4669

15 APR 1948

1948

Registry Number | E4669/1260/31

FROM

N. A. Gass
Anglo Iranian Oil Company

No.

Dated 13th April 15th "

Received in Registry

Future of British Women and Children in Palestine after May 15th.

Refers Foreign Office letter E3839/1260/31 of 25th March, The Company's Haifa Manager has arrived in London, and discussions with him produced the following conclusions, (1) It will not be possible to operate the Haifa refinery from the time that the protection of British Forces is withdrawn. (2) All British wives and families are being evacuated from Haifa, movemant will be completed by 30th April. (3) Company will thereafter continue to operate the refinery for as long as protection is available, petroleum stocks will be reduced to minimum, all British staff will then be withdrawn.

Last Paper

4606

References

(Print)

(How disposed of)

(Action completed)

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(*Minutes.*)

I have spoken to Mr. Mitchell of the Ministry of Fuel and Power about this letter, of which he has a copy. I pointed out that there was a slip in the second paragraph where the Company say that "after the 1st of August Palestine will be a foreign country .....". I am afraid this was taken from our letter on E 3839/1260/31 and that the phrase used was not quite accurate. It should be "after May 15".

Mr. Mitchell asked me whether in the course of this correspondence the Foreign Office have now informed the Oil Companies that the G.O.C. expected to be able to afford protection to the installations as long as British troops were in Haifa. I told him that I thought it best not to make such a statement in writing, since what the G.O.C. could do would always be subject to the exigencies of withdrawal and the War Office would not wish to bind him too greatly. The G.O.C. had specifically been given a free hand in his Directive and I thought that the most we could do would be for the Ministry of Fuel and Power to inform the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in confidence that the military authorities were reasonably sure of being able to afford protection until their withdrawal.

As regards the final paragraph of this letter, it is worth noting that according to a recent report from Palestine the Refinery has ceased to operate in the last few days owing to the defection of the Arab workers. I doubt if we shall see much more production from it during the present year.

E.R. Dept. Rwelyan. Defence 22.IV. Suez Liaison Dept. CR. 20/4

(J. G. S. Beith)
15th April, 1948.

Mr. Malkin
Sir E. Hall-Patch
N. at Vienna
R. Rwelyan 19 April 48.

22/4 Prime Minister to see.

L. F. L. Pyman 17/4

R. A. B. Butler 20.4

34967

ANGLO-IRANIAN OIL COMPANY
FORMERLY ANGLO-PERSIAN OIL CO.
LIMITED.

TELEPHONE:
CENTRAL 7422.

TELEGRAMS:
INLAND: ANGLIRAN, TELEX, LONDON.
FOREIGN: ANGLIRAN, LONDON.

E 4869
15 APR 1948

YOUR REFERENCE

BRITANNIC HOUSE.
FINSBURY CIRCUS.
LONDON. E.C.2.

E 40

13th April, 1948.

The Under-Secretary of State,
Foreign Office,
London, S.W. 1.

C O N F I D E N T I A L.

Sir,

We beg to refer to your letter E 3839/1260/31 of 25th March and our interim reply of 2nd April 1948. We have now discussed the situation with our Manager in Haifa who arrived in London for consultation on 8th April 1948.

In the face of the fear expressed by you that conditions will worsen and of your intimation that after the 15th May the General Officer Commanding in Palestine will no longer have powers to ensure the protection of our Staff, and furthermore that after the 1st August Palestine will be a foreign country in which there may not be any Central Authority which could be held responsible by His Majesty's Government for the safety of the lives and property of British subjects; and in view of the conditions prevailing in Palestine, we have reached the conclusion that it will not be possible to operate the Haifa Refinery from the time that the protection of British Forces is withdrawn.

In the meantime all British wives and families are being evacuated from Haifa to Cyprus or elsewhere and this movement will be completed by 30th April. Thereafter, we shall continue to operate the Refinery for as long as protection by British Forces is available, and petroleum stocks in the Refinery tankage will be reduced to the minimum required for whatever scale of operations may be possible. When it becomes necessary to shut down the Refinery, the British Staff will be withdrawn.

We have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

for ANGLO-IRANIAN OIL COMPANY LTD.

DIRECTOR.